

German Democratic Republic

CRITICAL REPORT ON REICHSBAHN

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The Ministry of Transportation includes a Secretariat for railroads, headed by State Secretary Wollweber. One of its departments is concerned with the Reichsbahn and is subdivided into sections for traffic, operations, construction, technical matters, law, administration, and training. Generally, the Ministry has no influence but follows instructions from Karlshorst (Soviet headquarters) and from the SED.

Organization of the Directorate General and the directorates is given as previously described [redacted] except for the addition of a Party Secretariat to the management. Here, too, the Soviets make the final decisions. Administrative decisions are without any legal basis, motivated only by opportunism. Individuals' rights are disregarded. Youth is being trained elaborately for leading positions in a unified Germany. There is a great turnover in personnel. The party organization is hated by everybody but the opportunists. Spying and intimidation is everywhere. The transportation police has been separated from the railroads and incorporated into the regular Land and zonal police forces. The repair shops have reached their former efficiency but the volume of repairs is increasing. As of 1 July 1951 the average turnaround time was 3.4 days. All organizations, technical as well as social, have been "coordinated". On 10 June 1951 new railroad uniforms were introduced. The total Reichsbahn personnel numbers about 242,000. The trackstructure is in poor condition. Rail breaks are frequent due to the use of heavy freight trains (carrying 2,000 tons and more). Shortages exist of certain tools (blades for rail saws, welding rods, ballast forks), new rails, fastenings, and cables. About 85 percent of all bridges and tunnels have been repaired. Switches, ties, and locomotives are in poor condition. Some degree of success has been achieved with coal-dust locomotives, Ostermann lubrication and installation of spark arresters. Quality of brown-coal is good, of black-coal from the Zwickau area poor. Lubricating material is scarce and of poor quality. The freight car park is dwindling (1945: 78,000; 1 August 1951: 70,000). Manual and electric control towers are in fairly good condition. Spare parts for safety installations are lacking.

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[redacted] Intensive potash mining in the Werra Valley and the Southern Harz Mountains requires great numbers of rolling stock (490 cars per 24 hours). Heavy freight trains, carrying an average of 1,500 tons, transport potash exports. The Maxhuette works have a daily demand of 500 cars. [redacted]

[redacted] Employment of female labor is increasing while freed male labor is forced into the mining and basic industries and into the people's police. Railroad personnel in the western border area is constantly rotated. Political surveillance is very strict. The Erfurt Directorate has between 170 and 201 locomotives in operating condition. Only the Erfurt-Weissenfels line is still double-track. As of 1 July 1951 the railroad workers union had 32,800 members about 30 percent of whom are opposed to the regime.

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